



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning



Planning for the Challenges Ahead

December 16, 2008

Bruce W. McClendon FAICP
Director of Planning

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**HEARING ON AMENDMENT TO COUNTY CODE (TITLE 22 -- PLANNING
AND ZONING) TO AMEND THE LA CRESCENTA-MONTROSE COMMUNITY
STANDARDS DISTRICT
(FIFTH SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT) (3 VOTES)**

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD, AFTER THE PUBLIC HEARING:

1. Consider the attached Negative Declaration together with any comments received during the public review process, find on the basis of the whole record before the Board that there is no substantial evidence the project will have a significant effect on the environment, find that the Negative Declaration reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the Board, and adopt the Negative Declaration.
2. Approve the recommendation of the Regional Planning Commission to amend the La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District to establish new development and design standards for the Foothill Boulevard corridor, as reflected in the draft ordinance.
3. Instruct County Counsel to prepare an ordinance amending the La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District as recommended by the Regional Planning Commission.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Section 22.44.090 of the County Code provides for the establishment of Community Standards Districts (CSD's) "to provide a means of implementing special development standards contained in adopted neighborhood, community, area, specific and local coastal plans within the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County, or to provide a

means of addressing special problems which are unique to certain geographic areas within the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County.”

The La Crescenta-Montrose CSD was established on January 30, 2007 and contains development and design standards for multi-family uses in the R-3 (Limited Multiple Residence) Zone. The proposed CSD amendment would add development and design standards for the Foothill Boulevard corridor. The purpose of these standards is to establish a cohesive identity for the corridor through comprehensive site planning and design practices that acknowledge the unique character of the surrounding community.

The Crescenta Valley Town Council, an elected body that serves in an advisory capacity to Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, initiated the formation of the Foothill Design Committee to respond to citizens’ concerns over the current appearance of the Foothill Boulevard corridor. For several years, the Committee worked with local residents, property owners, and staff from the Department of Regional Planning to draft a CSD amendment that reflects the desire of the La Crescenta-Montrose community to institute development and design standards for future development projects along the corridor. These standards regulate all aspects of project design, from site layout to building materials to landscaping and signage, and generally far more specific and restrictive than the County Code provisions currently in place.

Los Angeles County General Plan policies encourage guidelines governing the scale and design of new development on a community-by-community basis. The proposed CSD amendment is therefore consistent with the General Plan.

On August 20, 2008, the Regional Planning Commission considered the CSD amendment in a public hearing and recommended that it be adopted by your Board.

IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNTYWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The proposed CSD amendment promotes Goal 1 of the County’s Strategic Plan pertaining to “Service Excellence” through the development of clear and reasonable development and design standards, demonstrating that the Department of Regional Planning is responsive to citizens’ concerns and willing to work with community groups, residents, and property owners to address such concerns.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of the proposed CSD amendment will not result in any loss of revenue to the County or in significant new costs to the Department of Regional Planning or other County departments. Adoption of this CSD amendment will not result in the need for additional departmental staffing.

FINANCING

The proposed CSD amendment will not result in additional net County costs and therefore a request for funding is not being made at this time.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The proposed CSD amendment includes public input received during a community meeting held in La Crescenta-Montrose on November 13, 2007. Additionally, staff held several meetings with the Foothill Design Committee to receive additional input.

The Regional Planning Commission conducted a public hearing regarding the proposed CSD amendment on August 20, 2008. The Commission heard testimony from three individuals in support of the proposal.

A public hearing is required pursuant to Section 22.16.200 of the County Code and Section 65856 of the Government Code. Required notice must be given pursuant to the procedures and requirements set forth in Section 22.60.174 of the County Code. These procedures exceed the minimum standards of Sections 6061, 65090, and 65856 of the Government Code relating to notice of public hearing.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

Approval of the proposed CSD amendment will not significantly impact County services.

NEGATIVE DECLARATION/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The attached Initial Study shows that there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before your Board, that the adoption of the proposed CSD amendment will have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore a Negative Declaration was prepared in accordance with Section 15070 of the California Environmental Quality Act guidelines. Copies of the proposed Negative Declaration were transmitted to the County Clerk and La Canada-Flintridge Library for public review. In addition, public notice was published in one newspaper of general circulation pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21092. One comment was received during the public review period.

Based on the attached Negative Declaration, adoption of the proposed CSD amendment will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Respectfully submitted,

DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING



Bruce W. McClendon, FAICP
Director of Planning

BWM:RCH:MWG

Attachments:

1. Project Summary
2. Summary of Regional Planning Commission Proceedings
3. Resolution of the Regional Planning Commission
4. Recommended Ordinance for Board Adoption
5. Environmental Document
6. Legal Notice of Board Hearing
7. List of Persons to be Notified

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Auditor-Controller
Director, Department of Public Works
Assessor

Attachment 1: Project Summary

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING**

PROJECT SUMMARY

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposed amendment to Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) to amend the La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District (CSD) to establish Area-Specific Standards for the Foothill Boulevard corridor

REQUEST: Adoption of the proposed amendment to Title 22; Advance Planning Case No. 200800002

LOCATION: La Crescenta-Montrose

APPLICANT OR SOURCE: Regional Planning Commission directive

STAFF CONTACT: Mr. Mitch Glaser at (213) 974-6476

RPC HEARING DATE: August 20, 2008

RPC RECOMMENDATION: Board public hearing to consider adoption of the proposed amendment

MEMBERS VOTING AYE: Commissioners Bellamy, Helsley, Mødugno, Rew, and Valadez

MEMBERS VOTING NAY: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

MEMBERS ABSTAINING: None

KEY ISSUES: Residents of La Crescenta-Montrose are concerned about the appearance of the Foothill Boulevard corridor. The purpose of the CSD amendment is to address these concerns by establishing a cohesive identity for the corridor through comprehensive site planning and design practices.

The CSD amendment establishes standards for setbacks, building height, building design, landscaping, and signage that are generally far more specific and restrictive than the current standards in place. The CSD amendment requires that plans be

prepared and certified by a licensed architect and landscape architect and that any subsequent construction be reviewed and certified by a licensed architect.

MAJOR POINTS FOR:

The CSD amendment addresses community concerns about the appearance of the Foothill Boulevard corridor and will ensure that future development projects are well designed.

MAJOR POINTS AGAINST:

None

Attachment 2: Summary of Regional Planning Commission Proceedings

**REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARING PROCEEDINGS**

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO COUNTY CODE TITLE 22 (PLANNING AND
ZONING) TO AMEND THE LA CRESCENTA-MONTROSE COMMUNITY
STANDARDS DISTRICT (CSD)**

August 20, 2008

The Commission conducted a public hearing to consider the proposed amendment to Title 22 to amend the La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District (CSD) to establish Area-Specific Standards for the Foothill Boulevard corridor. The CSD amendment was initiated by a Regional Planning Commission motion on October 10, 2007.

Staff made a presentation concerning the proposed CSD amendment. Staff stated that the elected Crescenta Valley Town Council had formed the Foothill Design Committee, a group of volunteers with expertise in architecture and urban design, to address citizens' concerns over the appearance of the Foothill Boulevard corridor. Staff acknowledged that the Committee had developed design standards that were the foundation of the proposed CSD amendment. Staff stated that the purpose of the proposed CSD amendment was to establish a cohesive identity for the corridor through comprehensive site planning and design practices that acknowledge the unique character of the surrounding community. Staff elaborated on the collaborative process undertaken with the Committee, local residents and property owners, and representatives from the Land Use Regulation Division of the Department of Regional Planning and from the Building and Safety Division of the Department of Public Works.

The Commission recognized the need for additional development standards for the Foothill Boulevard corridor and commended the Foothill Design Committee's efforts. The Commission accepted a revision presented by staff and requested that the modification procedure be revised to eliminate the requirement that an application be denied if a certain number of protest letters were received.

Three members of the public, including one elected member of the Crescenta Valley Town Council, spoke in support of the proposed CSD amendment.

The Commission closed the public hearing and approved the proposed amendment. Commissioners Bellamy, Helsley, Modugno, Rew, and Valadez voted aye. Staff was then instructed to transmit the item to the Board of Supervisors for consideration in a public hearing.

Attachment 3: Resolution of the Regional Planning Commission

**RESOLUTION
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

WHEREAS, the Regional Planning Commission of the County of Los Angeles has reviewed the matter of an amendment to Title 22 (Zoning Ordinance) of the Los Angeles County Code related to an amendment to the La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District (CSD); and

WHEREAS, the Regional Planning Commission finds as follows:

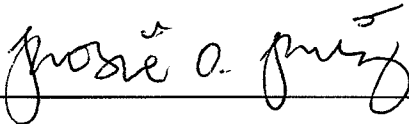
1. The unincorporated community of La Crescenta-Montrose is part of the Fifth Supervisorial District. The area is located within the Crescenta Valley, at the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, and is bounded on the north by the Angeles National Forest, on the west and south by the City of Glendale, and on the east by the City of La Canada-Flintridge.
2. In January 2007 the Foothill Design Committee of the Crescenta Valley Town Council submitted design standards for the Foothill Boulevard corridor within La Crescenta-Montrose and requested that staff prepare an ordinance.
3. In October 2007 the Regional Planning Commission initiated a hearing on an ordinance amending the La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District that would include design standards for the Foothill Boulevard corridor within La Crescenta-Montrose.
4. The proposed ordinance amending the La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District is intended to establish a cohesive identity for the Foothill Boulevard corridor within La Crescenta-Montrose through comprehensive site planning and design practices that acknowledge the unique character of the surrounding community.
5. In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, an Initial Study was prepared for the project that demonstrates that this regulatory action will not have a significant effect on the environment. Based on the Initial Study, Department of Regional Planning staff has prepared a related Negative Declaration for this project.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Regional Planning Commission recommends that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors:

1. Hold a public hearing to consider the proposed amendment to Title 22 (Zoning Ordinance) of the Los Angeles County Code related to an amendment to the La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District;

2. Certify completion of and approve the attached Negative Declaration and find that the amendment of the La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District will not have a significant effect on the environment; and
3. Adopt the attached ordinance amending the La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District and determine that it is compatible with and supportive of the goals and policies of the Los Angeles County General Plan.

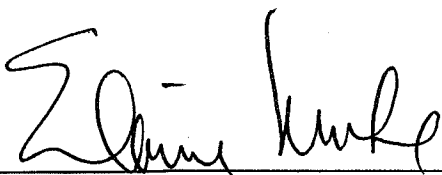
I hereby certify that the foregoing was adopted by a majority of the voting members of the Regional Planning Commission of the County of Los Angeles on August 20, 2008.

By 

Rosie O. Ruiz, Secretary
Regional Planning Commission
County of Los Angeles

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY COUNSEL

By 

**Attachment 4: Recommended Ordinance for Board
Adoption**

ORDINANCE NO. _____

An ordinance amending Title 22 – Planning and Zoning – of the Los Angeles County Code related to the addition of area-specific development standards to the La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District.

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles hereby ordains as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 22.44.139 is amended as follows:

22.44.139 La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District.

A. Purpose. The La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District (“CSD”) is established to ensure that new multi-family buildings are designed to be compatible with the character of existing residential neighborhoods; and to improve the appearance of the Foothill Boulevard commercial corridor through the thoughtful design of pedestrian-friendly structures integrated with extensive landscaping.

...

~~C. Exemptions. This CSD shall not apply to development proposals which are the subject of applications for the following types of permits or approvals:~~

~~1. Buildings or building additions for which a valid building permit was issued prior to March 7, 2006, provided that such building permit has not expired prior to the effective date of the ordinance creating this CSD;~~

~~2. Buildings or building additions located on a primary or secondary highway and for which a complete application for a director’s review was submitted prior to March 7, 2006, provided that such director’s review has not expired prior to the effective date of the ordinance creating this CSD;~~

